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*This information is available in alternate formats upon request.*



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# A VOLUNTEER'S HANDBOOK FOR MONITORING NEW ENGLAND SALT MARSHES

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**MAY 2002**



Photo: Ethan Nedeau



Dear Salt Marsh Monitoring Volunteer,

Thank you for your interest in salt marshes, and your commitment to assessing, maintaining, and improving their health and condition. Salt marshes are incredibly productive ecosystems, important to the Commonwealth's biodiversity and economic vitality, as well as the community character of our coastal cities and towns. We have made great efforts in this state to preserve and protect these critical habitats, but, like all other states, have only begun to understand how to evaluate their basic health. Data collected by citizen volunteers like you will go a long way in helping us to advance our understanding of these complex and intriguing wetlands.

This manual provides a framework for volunteer monitoring groups to collect accurate data in a consistent fashion. By using this approach, volunteer data can be used by larger state and federal efforts to look at salt marsh condition. While developed for Massachusetts' salt marshes, we are confident the guide will be useful when assessing salt marshes elsewhere in New England, the Gulf of Maine, and south along the Atlantic seaboard. We encourage you to adapt this framework to your local area, and to make your data available to the state agencies and federal agencies working on these issues.

Again, thank you for all your efforts on behalf of Bay State salt marshes. We encourage and appreciate your involvement and look forward to working with you toward a better understanding of salt marsh health.

Very truly yours,

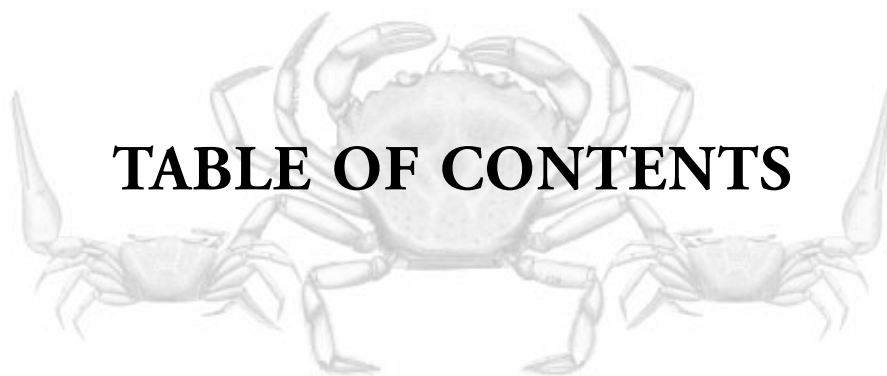
A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Bob Durand". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Bob Durand  
Secretary of Environmental Affairs  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts



Photo: Ethan Nedeau





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